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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN'S MUSHARRAF ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UAE

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf paid his first official visit to the UAE since President Khalifa succeeded the late Sheikh Zayed last November. During the June 4-5 visit, the two leaders discussed the war on terror, Pakistan's internal political stability, Pakistan's ties with Afghanistan, and the situation in Kashmir. Musharraf addressed 1,000 Pakistani expatriates, including dozens of laborers, exhorting them not to encourage, or side with, forces back home that spread hatred. Musharraf also addressed Pakistani and UAE businessmen, urging them to invest in Pakistan's economy to help address the root causes of terrorism and extremism. End Summary.

2. (C) Pakistan's President Musharraf paid an official visit to the UAE June 4-5. The visit came three weeks after Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed had traveled to Lahore to meet with Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. While in Abu Dhabi, Musharraf met with President Khalifa, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed and most of the UAE's senior leadership. Musharraf's meetings with Khalifa covered the war on terror, Pakistan's internal political stability, Pakistan's ties with Afghanistan, and the situation in Kashmir, according to MFA sources.

3. (C) MFA Under Secretary Abdullah Rashid Al Noaimi told Ambassador June 8 that the UAE considered Musharraf to be "the right man, at the right place, at the right time," and added that the UAE believed that Pakistan needed Musharraf's leadership. Al Noaimi said that the UAE supported Musharraf, politically and financially. Pakistan and the UAE maintain "very good" bilateral relations, a senior Pakistani diplomat told Pol Chief June 8. On the economic side, the UAE has stepped up its investments in Pakistan considerably (\$1 billion in the past three years), especially in the banking, construction, and telecommunications sectors, he noted. During Musharraf's visit, the two countries agreed to exchange trade delegations in the future.

4. (C) One of Musharraf's principal missions in coming to the UAE was to establish a rapport with the UAE's new leadership, the senior Pakistani diplomat said. "President Zayed loved Pakistan, and Pakistan loved President Zayed. When Zayed died, Pakistan lost a father figure. Our President wanted to ensure the continuity of that special relationship," the diplomat told Pol Chief. That mission was accomplished, he added. Musharraf's entourage included Foreign Minister Khorshed Kasuri, Labor and Manpower Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Privatization and Investment Minister Abdul Hafiz Sheikh, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Resources Mohammed Naseer Mangal, and Minister of State for Water and Power Amir Muqam.

5. (C) On June 5, Musharraf met with approximately 1,000 members of Pakistan's 450,000-strong expatriate community in the UAE. During the meeting, he appealed to his fellow citizens not to encourage or side with forces or elements back home that spread hatred or indulge in anti-social activities. Musharraf stressed the need to tackle sectarianism and extremism, and noted his government's focus on education and policies to reduce poverty, control unemployment, and improve the economy. He also explained the objectives of the government's security operations in some of Pakistan's regions. Musharraf highlighted the role Pakistani expatriates have played in improving the economic situation in Pakistan. He said that their remittances provide an important source of foreign exchange in Pakistan. (Note: In the past three years, overseas Pakistanis have remitted \$12 billion to Pakistan, \$5 billion of which comes from Pakistani expatriates in the Gulf, according to the UAE's official news agency.)

6. (C) Musharraf also met with Pakistani and UAE business people, urging them to invest in Pakistan's economy. The UAE's official news agency reported that Musharraf told the business community Pakistan had succeeded in curbing terrorism over the last few years. "What you see sometimes are instances of sectarian violence. Even so, none of these acts has targeted a foreign business," he said. Pakistan's Privatization and Investment Minister Abdul Hafiz Sheikh briefed the audience on investment opportunities, particularly in the telecommunications sector, now that it is being privatized.

17. (U) Musharraf last visited the UAE in November 2004 to attend the funeral of the late UAE President Sheikh Zayed. He paid his respects at Zayed's tomb during his recent visit.
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